

Date: 03/12/2012

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 2535, SD2 (sscr2706) Relating to Instructional Time

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to develop up to four bell schedules for elementary, middle, and high schools to standardize instructional periods across all schools, with the exception of charter schools and multi-track public schools. Requires each school to choose one of the available bell schedules for each grade level. Amends the definition of "student instructional hours" for elementary and secondary schools. (SD2)

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) supports SB2535, SD2 (sscr2706), with the amended definition of "student instructional time." The expanded definition provides clarity of what constitutes instruction.

The Department will work with appropriate role groups to develop and implement consistent standardized bell schedules. Standardized scheduling will allow for coordinated planning and learning opportunities for students and school staff.

Teaching Today for Hawaii's Tomorrow
Hawaii State Teachers Association

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION

RE: SB 2535, SD2 – RELATING TO INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

March 12, 2012

WIL OKABE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Takumi and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association appreciates efforts to broadly define instructional time. We believe that the impact of realigning bell schedules upon class size and educational flexibility warrants more careful consideration by lawmakers. We strongly suggest that you look at educational programming by evaluating the status of Act 51 prior to enacting additional mandates. HSTA will continue to oppose this bill as there is no evidence to show there has been any movement towards engaging teachers or HSTA in proposed bell schedule development. Teachers are very concerned with the “unknown” factor.

We acknowledge SB 2535, SD 2 attempts in defining instructional time that connects student learning time with general learner outcomes. Employing a broad-based definition of instructional time connected to GLOs can ensure that multiple forms of instruction, learning, and curricula will be accounted for, including directed study, project-based learning, technology-assisted instruction, and traditional classroom interaction between students and teachers. We note that these measures, if implemented, may subject standardized periods to the master agreement exceptions policy, which holds that the most effective educational decisions are made “closest to the point of implementation,” and provides a process for requesting exceptions to the agreement to account for flexible work time distribution.

We reiterate our concerns, standardized bell schedules may leave out the site-based initiatives which schools base their current applicability. Not all schools have the same lunch or break schedule, owing in part to the various sizes of school populations. Bus schedules also vary from one school to the next, because rural

students may live farther from campus than their urban peers (or, to flip the situation, urban schools must transport more children to and from campus on a daily basis than their rural counterparts). Finally, since bell schedules are largely based upon a school's population, standardization of bell schedules could result in larger class sizes, with schools deviating from the current class size allocation; unable to find a schedule that fits their unique student-teacher ratio.

HSTA believes attempting to homogenize bell schedules sets poor policy precedent. Lawmakers have stated, during the current legislative session, that the Legislature should not be micromanaging the Department of Education, and have even proposed legislation that would repeal statutes relating to job sharing, leaves of absence, sabbaticals, and other education subsections. It seems contradictory that policymakers would introduce legislation to remove the Legislature from departmental affairs with regard to teacher activities, and also introduce legislation to oversee school bell schedules.

Issues of instructional time are likely to impact a teacher's work day, which is a process of collective bargaining. Accordingly, we believe system wide instructional time reforms should also result in fair compensation. We again encourage you to use this measure as an opportunity to spur dialogue about the effectiveness of Act 51's numerous initiatives, including the institution of School Community Councils and weighted student formula, both of which, in our opinion, can be improved upon to be more inclusive with respect to giving stakeholders, which include teachers, a greater voice in determining the trajectory of their schools' academic and financial plans. Teachers are currently entitled to review a school's financial reports, but are unable to appeal to an independent administrative entity if their voice is denied during the financial planning process. Instead, they must appeal to escalating departmental levels, first their principal, followed by their complex-area superintendent and superintendent of schools which, some say, has lead to discouraging input into school-level decisions.

From our perspective, the state's education goals are best served when decisions are based on consistent policies that are based on a foundation that enhances inclusion of all voices. The bell schedule measures suggested may further centralize governance of the DOE. We must continue to work together to redress problems with existing initiatives before embarking on new reforms.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HAWAI'I EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER

Informing the Education Community

Written Testimony
presented before the
House Committee on Education
March 12, 2012, 2:00 pm, Room 309
by
Donald B. Young, Director
Hawai'i Educational Policy Center

SB 2535 SD2 Relating to Instructional Time

Testimony in Opposition.

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Belatti, and Members of the Committee on Education.

The Hawai'i Educational Policy Center (HEPC) opposes SB 2535 as currently drafted. Among our concerns are the following:

1. The bill needs a purpose. While there has been some discussion as to the disparity of student learning times from school to school, there is nothing in the bill to clarify this. It is not clear if the purpose is to ensure a minimum length of the students' school day, and if so, what that length should be.
2. The bill continues the model of top down governance. HEPC encourages the shift from rigid one-size-fits-all structures to more flexible, school-based decision making. HEPC does not support the concept that all elementary, middle and high schools must conform to an abstract or arbitrary management of time during the student's learning day or week. While Hawai'i policy makers have often advocated more decentralized governance, this bill appears to shift back to the older model in which State policy makers know best.
3. School level input is appropriate. There is no provision for input from individual schools, or even from the various complexes or districts.
4. The waiver process is often cumbersome. HEPC does appreciate that individual learning communities may apply for a waiver. However, waivers typically require several levels of approval and can be tedious and bureaucratic. The burden of proof will be on the school, rather than the State office. HEPC respectfully requests that your committee amend this bill to require that one "option" for bell schedules be a set of criteria for individual schools. If for any reason a school prefers an alternative to one of the standardized schedules, as long as they met the criteria, they could proceed.

HEPC agrees with the dynamic and broad definitions of instructional time contained in this draft.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



46-063 Emepela Pl. #U101 Kaneohe, HI 96744 · (808) 679-7454 · Kris Coffield · Co-founder/Legislative Director

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE BILL 2535, SENATE DRAFT 2

House Committee on Education
Hon. Roy Takumi, Chair
Hon. Della Au Belatti, Vice Chair

Monday, March 12, 2012, 2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

Honorable Chair Takumi and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing the IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 150 local members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in support of, with amendments for SB 2535, SD2, relating to taxation.

Until recently, the IMUAlliance has opposed efforts to standardize instructional time, believing that doing so outside of the collective bargaining process may impact ongoing negotiations between the Hawaii State Teachers Association and the state regarding compensation for lengthened learning time, as well as distribution thereof. We continue to believe that standardization of bell schedules must be implemented with careful consideration for varying transportation schedules, class sizes, and school populations, in addition to an increased emphasis on localized accountability and management of student needs.

We find that there is much to like about the proposed measure, however, such as the long overdue codification of a state-sanctioned definition of instructional time, something that is absolutely necessary if discussions about how to best account and allocate resources for forthcoming elongated school days are going to progress. Moreover, we are especially pleased that the definition of instructional time contained in this measure is connected to general learner outcomes, ensuring pedagogical and programmatic flexibility throughout the Department of Education. Finally, we heartily note that the bill expands the HSTA-BOE master agreement exceptions policy to allow schools to petition for exceptions to standardized periods, should a school find that the schedules devised by the department fail to maximize student achievement. While the measure may heighten the number of schools seeking an exemption, the modified exceptions statute guarantees that due process will be granted to schools in the event that standardization results in unintended consequences for educators, their classrooms, or the output of their keiki.

That said, we believe that the following amendment would strengthen the bill, as it moves forward. To address concerns that the State Legislature is micromanaging the DOE, we suggest allowing the department flexibility to determine the number of scheduling options necessary for each scholastic level (elementary, middle, and high schools), which may or may not require the same number of options. Accordingly, we encourage your committee to revise Section 1 of this bill to read: “§302A- **Bell schedules.** The department shall develop up to four multiple standard bell schedule options for elementary, middle, and high schools. A school shall have the discretion to implement one of the available bell schedules for each grade level. This section shall not apply to charter schools or multi-track public schools.”

On a personal note, we entreat you to address the lack of statewide definition of “student achievement,” in the near future. While this measure is not the appropriate place to begin such a discussion, it is worth noting, perhaps, that overall efforts to reform lagging schools and advance achievement are inhibited by the lack of a vision of what achievement entails. Disagreement over what metrics to utilize for assessment should not be viewed as a barrier to bringing stakeholders together to debate how to define success and, hopefully, find common ground from which to build schools that are a reflection of our own best selves.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
Legislative Director
IMUAlliance

841 Bishop St., Suite 301
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813



Telephone: 808 926-1530
Contact@HEECcoalition.org

House Committee on Education
Representative Takumi, Chair
Representative Belatti, Vice Chair

March 11, 2012

Dear Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Belatti and Committee Members:

This testimony is submitted in support of SB2535 SD2. We support the changes incorporated in SD2.

The Hui for Excellence in Education (HE'E) is a diverse coalition of over 30 parent and community organizations dedicated to improving student achievement by increasing family and community engagement and partnerships in our schools. Our member list is attached.

SB2535 SD2 states that the Department of Education will devise up to four standard bell schedules that meet the instructional time requirement for the 2014-2015 year, and a school would choose one to implement. For elementary schools, the requirement is 915 hours per year (5 hours and 5 minutes/day) and for secondary schools it is 990 hours per year (5 hours and 30 minutes/day). This would apply for all the public schools except charter schools or multi-track public schools.

The Coalition supports the bill. The four bell schedule options gives schools equitable instructional time, but at the same time, allows flexibility at the school level. For the families and students, this alignment and standardization will make understanding the bell schedules much easier. Military and other new families moving to the state will also have a much easier time understanding the schedules and all families will know that their children are receiving the minimum amount of instructional time set by law. They will also know that in addition to great teachers in the classroom, their children will be receiving an amount of instruction equal to their peers statewide and on the mainland.

Additionally, if there were standardization in bell schedules among schools in a complex or adjoining complexes, students would be able to take an AP, theatre, band or other class at another school which is not available at their home campus

(online or in person). Or, an 8th grade student could take an advanced math or science class online or in person at their nearby high school. This alignment in bell schedule would create opportunities for learning that are currently impossible with the many different schedules. As we consider 21st century learning opportunities, the aligned bell schedules may create an array of options for online, dual enrollment, and project based learning.

We would be glad to work with the legislature, department and unions to make this effort successful. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

Our support of this bill represents a 75% consensus or more of our membership.

Sincerely,

Cheri Nakamura
HE'E Coalition Director

Dear Chair Roy M. Takumi and Vice Chair Della Au Bellatti,

I am writing in opposition to S.B. 2535 relating to instructional time. While I would like to have more instructional time with my students at Mililani High (5 meetings a week rather than just 4), I oppose a top-down approach to directing school reform. While schools and individual teachers should be held accountable for outcomes, they should not be told what path to take to meet that outcome. Mililani High is partly able to have the array of programs it does because the bell schedule saves money on teacher labor. This measure could have unintended consequences at schools that have found ways to build excellent programs under tight budgets.

Thank you,

Claire Gearen
Teacher, Mililani High
Resident, 1212 Punahou St. #2601
Honolulu, HI 96826